

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
83R21526 ADM-D

C.S.S.B. 315  
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State Affairs  
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Committee Report (Substituted)

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Texans are more connected to technology than ever before. As a response to the increased usage of technology and the Internet in our everyday lives, state and local governments have increased access to basic government functions using the Internet. Fifteen states have passed legislation establishing online voter registration because of the convenience, cost savings, and decrease in related errors. Various errors can occur during the current voter application process such as clerical discrepancies, applications being lost in the mail, the cost of postage, and problems with inaccurate information.

By implementing an electronic voter registration system, the state will significantly reduce the likelihood of errors, and join a growing sisterhood of states in bringing this important right of citizenship to our fingertips. C.S.S.B. 315 seeks to lower the rate of voter registration errors by providing applicants who have a valid driver's license or personal identification card issued in Texas a highly secure website to personally input voter registration information and electronically submit the information to the Office of the Secretary of State.

C.S.S.B. 315 amends current law relating to electronic voter registration.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the secretary of state in Section 1 (Section 13.009, Election Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 13, Election Code, by adding Section 13.009, as follows:

Sec. 13.009. ELECTRONIC VOTER REGISTRATION. (a) Requires the secretary of state (SOS) to implement a program to allow a person to complete a voter registration application over the Internet from the official website of this state. Requires that the websites of SOS and the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS) also provide a link to the location of the application on the official website of this state.

(b) Requires an applicant for electronic voter registration who has an unexpired driver's license or personal identification card issued in this state to:

(1) attest to the truth of the information provided on the application by affirmatively accepting the information as true; and

(2) affirmatively consent to the use of the signature on the applicant's driver's license or personal identification card for voter registration purposes.

(c) Requires an applicant for electronic voter registration who does not have an unexpired driver's license or personal identification card issued in this state to:

(1) attest to the truth of the information provided on the application by affirmatively accepting the information as true; and

(2) print a registration application from the website the applicant is using to register, sign the application, and mail it to the registrar.

(d) Requires the program to require that a digital copy of the applicant's signature be obtained from the DPS, for each application submitted under Subsection (b).

(e) Requires the program, for each application submitted under Subsection (c), to provide the applicant with:

(1) a registration application that the applicant can print from the registration website, sign, and mail to the registrar as required under Subsection (c)(2); and

(2) information about how the applicant can obtain a driver's license or personal identification card from DPS.

(f) Provides that an application submitted under this section is considered for all purposes as an application submitted by mail under this title.

(g) Requires SOS to adopt rules as necessary to implement this section, including rules to provide for additional security measures necessary to ensure the accuracy and integrity of applications submitted electronically.

(h) Requires the rules adopted under Subsection (g) to require that:

(1) the Internet website through which a person may complete a voter registration application include a description of the offense described by Section 13.007 (False Statement On Application) in a conspicuous location on the website near the place where the person begins or submits the application; and

(2) the state electronic Internet portal project be used to authenticate the identity of a person who submits an application electronically under this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2013.